

ICSU Panel on World Data Centers
Asheville, North Carolina
November 8, 2000
Meeting Summary

Attendance

Panel

Ferris Webster (chair), Stan Ruttenberg (treasurer), Anne Linn (secretary), Tohru Araki (Japan and India representative), Sun Honglie (China representative), Herb Kroehl (WDC representative), Sun Jiulin (WDC representative), Yuri Tyupkin (assistant secretary), and Dave Clark (assistant secretary).

Guests

Otto Spaargaren (WDC for Soils), Mark Eakin (WDC for Paleoclimatology), and Tom Karl (National Climatic Data Center).

1. Results of the All WDC Conference

Webster gave an overview of the Conference outcome.

Action items:

- Create a task team to develop a plan for upgrading the WDC system
 - use the plan to seek funds
 - membership: Bob Chen (chair), Dave Clark (secretary), Gurbax Singh Lakhina, Chuang Liu, Alexander Sterin, and Matthew Wild
- Set up an informal group to explore funding opportunities, using their contacts with agencies
 - customize the plan to meet agency interests
 - membership: Ferris Webster (chair), Alexei Gvishiani, Sun Honglie, and Stan Ruttenberg

Action: The task team will send their plan for upgrading the WDC system to Linn by early March so she can prepare the proposal for submission to ICSU by March 31.

A technical group to set up formats, standards, etc. will be created later. This group will need funding to carry out its task.

Action items for the centers:

- Create a simple HTML list of data collections
 - to be posted on center websites by April 1, 2001
 - An example format can be found at http://nsidc.org/NSIDC/CATALOG/noaa_data_list.html by November 15, 2000
 - send email with URL to ahittelman@ngdc.noaa.gov when the list has been created
 - Linn will send a message to directors on the WDC list server
- Establish additional mirror sites
 - continuing activity

- Recommend data rescue and/or other small projects (\$3,000-\$5,000) to the Panel by early March

An issue that didn't arise at the conference is data quality. One mechanism for improving data quality is for the Panel to support travel/cooperation between two data centers or a personnel exchange. Perhaps two centers could try this as a model for future quality control work.

Action: Panel members should send suggestions to Linn on ways the Panel could help centers improve data quality.

Ruttenberg gave a financial report. The pre-conference budget was \$130,000, much of which was earmarked for other projects. (Earmarks include \$40,000 for data projects at the National Geophysical Data Center [NGDC], \$14,500 from NGDC and \$5,000 from ICSU for modernization of the WDC system, and \$10,000 for Panel meetings/travel.) The All WDC conference cost approximately \$42,000. Thus, about \$20,000 is available to support the second phase of the modernization project.

Much of the financial support to the Panel comes from NGDC, which transfers money for data projects through the Panel.

Action: Webster will talk with Levitus (National Oceanographic Data Center) about using the Panel to transfer funds.

The next conference will be held in approximately 3 years, when sufficient funds have been accumulated.

Action: Panel members will suggest possible themes and locations for the next All WDC Conference.

2. Proposed new centers and mirror sites

The WDC for Solar-Terrestrial Science, Sydney was created in April 2000. Two other WDC proposals are currently under consideration by the Panel:

WDC for marine environmental data, Germany. A site visit was held (Webster represented the Panel) in July 2000. The review was tough and fair. The German Research Council indicated that it would send a letter recommending approval of the center, but has not yet done so.

WDC for atmospheric trace gases and global topography, Germany. The Panel authorized a site visit to the center, and the German Research Council has suggested a visit to the center this fall.

Action: Webster will call Meier again about the status of (1) the German Research Council's recommendation on the WDC for marine environmental data, and (2) the site visit to the proposed WDC for atmospheric trace gases and global topography.

Three WDCs were proposed in response to the 1997 WDC-IGBP conference. The new WDCs would serve the needs of IGBP core programs:

WDC for hydrology, United States. A letter of intent to establish a new center at the National Climatic Data Center in Asheville was sent to the Panel three years ago. Since that time, center priorities have changed and the center has withdrawn the letter of intent.

WDC for land use/land cover change, Spain. A letter of intent to establish a new center at the LUCC center in Barcelona was sent to the Panel three years ago. The LUCC center has since been moved to Belgium and there is no longer a strong advocate for the new WDC.

WDC for land cover data, United States. A full proposal to establish a new center at the EROS Data Center in Sioux Falls was sent to the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) in 2000. The NAS will review the proposal in the fall and determine whether a site visit (with Panel participation) should be authorized.

The WDC for Paleoclimatology has established three mirror sites (Toulouse, Johannesburg, and Nairobi), and will create one at the University of Mendoza in Argentina. The last two were supported in part by ICSU Panel funds. Staff at the University of Mendoza will prepare a Spanish translation of the web site.

3. Updating the Guide and brochure

The Guide to the World Data Centers and companion brochure have not been updated since 1996. Updating these materials is important because there are several new centers and directors, and the guidelines for creating new world data centers have been simplified. The Guide will be updated on the web and a decision will be made later about publishing a new version.

Action: Ruttenberg will send the current brochure to Linn and Webster, who will take the lead on preparing a new brochure.

Action: Clark will send 100 copies of the Guide to Linn and 5 copies to Webster.

Action: Linn will send the updated guidelines for creating new world data centers to Clark.

Action: Clark and Ruttenberg will take the lead on updating the Guide on the web. In addition to updating information, they will add the list of the holdings (being prepared by the centers) to each center's existing description.

4. WDC home page

It is extremely difficult for users to find data through the WDC home page, which is organized by geography. (Users typically look for data by discipline.) A search capability as discussed at the All WDC conference will help users find data. A pull-down list of keywords is also desirable.

Action: Clark, Kroehl, and Eakin will ensure that the WDC home page is brought up to date and redesigned. Clark will act as the liaison with Linn. Clark will send a message to all the WDC directors (WDC-Directors@nas.edu) asking for suggestions on the web page.

5. Other business

The WDC for Recent Crustal Movements underwent a reorganization in 1996 and requested permission to go inactive for a few years. It has not been possible to communicate with the center since. If the center no longer exists, it will be formally disestablished.

Action: Webster will work through ICSU to contact the Czech Academy. Unless the Czech Academy says otherwise, the WDC for Recent Crustal Movements will be disestablished.

The next Panel meeting will be held sometime in 2001, probably at a conference that several members are planning to attend.